



Vermont's Blue Spruce Farm Wins National Award For Dairy Farm Sustainability

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Farm Family Owners of Cabot Creamery Cooperative Applaud National Recognition of One of Their Own

Cabot, VT - During a special awards ceremony held in Washington, D.C. on March 7 - the eve of National Agriculture Day - the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy announced the winners of the inaugural U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards, a program to recognize dairy farms, dairy companies and collaborative partnerships for efforts that advance the sustainability of the American dairy industry.

Blue Spruce Farm, operated by the Audet family of Bridport, Vt., was named a winner of the prestigious award for Outstanding Dairy Farm Sustainability. Widely recognized as a dairy pioneer, Blue Spruce Farm received the national honor in recognition of its commitment to sustainability. Blue Spruce was one of the first farms in the nation to install a variable speed vacuum pump control, reducing energy used during milking by nearly 60 percent. Blue Spruce also served as the pilot dairy farm to launch the successful Central Vermont Public Service's Cow Power program, which allows consumers to purchase renewable energy generated by dairy farms. By implementing new technologies in milking, milk cooling, barn construction, ventilation, water heating and lighting, the farm reduced energy use 50% from an average of 1,000 kWh per cow per year, to an average of just 500 kWh per cow per year. These savings, in turn, reduced greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 500 pounds of CO₂e per cow per year.

"We're thrilled with this national recognition of Eugene and Marie Audet and their family," said Neal Rea, Chairman of the Board of Agri-Mark, the northeast's premier dairy cooperative, and a N.Y. state dairy farmer himself. Agri-Mark is the parent company of the award winning Cabot and McCadam dairy brands. "The Audets, like many of our cooperative's dairy farmers, have not only embraced sustainable farming practices, they have taken them to a whole new level," Rea continued. "The Audets are leading by example as they incorporate pioneering nutrient and energy management practices into all facets of their operation. They're embracing new and emerging technologies and paving the way for all our farmers to produce the highest quality dairy products possible while preserving and protecting the planet's natural resources."

"We, and all farm families, simply by our very nature, have been developing and implementing sustainable practices for generations," said Marie Audet in her acceptance speech. "My husband, Eugene, and I are delighted to receive this award on behalf of our family because it is actually a

public affirmation of our desire to produce quality milk in a way that is good for our animals, good for the environment and good for our community."

An independent panel of judges representing the full spectrum of the dairy supply chain — as well as academia, government, media, business and non-governmental organizations — selected this year's winners based on each applicant's results as measured by economic, environmental and social responsibility aspects.

"In reviewing more than 40 nominations and selecting the 'best of the best,' the Sustainability Awards judges were impressed by the model programs and processes that deliver real benefit to the business, community and the environment," said Molly Jahn, who serves as special adviser for Sustainability Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and as the U.S. Commissioner on Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Change. "Clearly, sustainability is core to the success of these farms and organizations. They serve as leaders in their communities and industry."

The awards are part of the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Commitment, an industry-wide effort to measure and improve the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the dairy industry. Launched in 2008, the Sustainability Commitment is supported by hundreds of organizations, including universities, government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

BLUE SPRUCE FARM

Blue Spruce Farm is a third generation dairy farm located in Bridport, Vermont. Owned and operated by the Audet family, the farm produces more than 3.6 million gallons of milk annually and crops 3,000 acres to provide feed for their cows. Milk from the farm is used to make Cabot's Vermont Cheddar Cheese and other dairy products marketed. Blue Spruce is perhaps best known for being the pioneering Cow Power farm in Vermont. Cow Power allows consumers to purchase renewable energy generated on a dairy farm that results in substantial savings of traditional fossil fuels, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and a cleaner environment.

SOURCE: Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy